

Interview of Jack Fore of Sebastopol

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NA67

January 8, 2001

Banking Career and Family History

EM: How did your family settle in Sonoma County?

JF: My grandfather Thomas O'Connor was born in 1844 and died in 1904, was born in county court Ireland. He left Ireland as a teenager and came to the United States by Canada. Mary Dowdall, my grandmother, was born in 1855 died in 1914, was born in New York City. Her parents were born in Ireland and were on their way to California, but stopped in New York City for a short time and then continued by ship around the horn of South America. Three years later they arrived in San Francisco. Thomas and Mary were married November 18, 1874, moved into their new home on November 3, 1875 and had their first child on January 20, 1876.

EM: Where were they living at the time? In San Francisco?

JF: They were living on a ranch east of Petaluma, on the Petaluma Hills there. They had a ranch and they had seven children. My mother always told us stories about how they rode horses to school and on Saturday nights they would go to a dance in Petaluma in a horse and buggy and most of the time they would all fall asleep on the way home. When they woke up either the horse had taken them back and was standing by the barn or else it was along side the road eating grass. So, in those days they didn't have to have a designated driver.

She also told stories of riding horseback over the top of the Sonoma Mountains to El Verano where the Dowdall side of our family lived. So they were going back and forth over the top of the mountains. They were from Ireland too. My father was born in Illinois. We don't have too much background on my father's nationality on the account that none of them seem to know. His sister didn't have any idea of what nationality she was. They lived in Petaluma. My father and mother were born... were married in Sebastopol. He operated a cigar store and pool hall here in Sebastopol.

EM: And your father's name was?

JF: My father's name was Walter Frederick Fore and my mother's name was Amy Jo

O'Connor Fore. My grandfather was Thomas O'Connor and then... I don't recall very much until the 1920s. I wrote down my history here into 10-year periods starting with the 1920s and uh, I was born here in 1917. So I was only 3 or 4 years old when the '20s started, but we spent all of the decade of the '20s at 536 South Main Street in Sebastopol until about the time I entered high school in 1931. This can be generally described as fun time at least until 1930 when The Depression really started for us. Our backyard was usually filled with kids playing baseball, football, or basketball. Our mother said all we had to do was throw some kind-of ball in the air and by the time it came down we had enough kids to choose sides. During baseball season if a foul tip broke the kitchen window, no problem, it was just replaced. The neighbors as best as I could recall included Carl Whitahase on the south side and Mr. Beati, a city councilman, on the north. His renter was Jim Shanks, a California highway motorcycle patrolman. His Harley Davidson was a big attraction. Next to the Whitahase was Alvin Lukeason and his parents. Further south was Paul Meeker and then John and June Columbo, now Mrs. Joe Schaffer. Their father owned the Columbo Lumber Company. Across from us lived Charlie, Hazel, and Bud Hillard. Hazel was later Mrs. Bill Edmund. Next to Beati's towards town was the United States congressman, Hubert Scutter and his wife Helen. They were very friendly and we grew up calling him by his nickname, Scud. Next to them was the large Edgeworth House followed by Bill Ellison and then Tammy and Hattie Smith. ^{ALLISON?} Tammy was a former baseball player in the Pacific Coast League, manager of the West Brother's Softball Team, and owner of a planeing mill on Depot Street. Hattie operated a beauty shop in her home. Others in the neighborhood were Bob and Corine Gray, Jill, Art, and Alice Albalar, Maurice Moore, his father would later serve as city treasurer just before me, and McFarland Family who were our cousins, Fred and Elenor, Inez and Jean lived a block away on High Street. Just behind our house was a large lot fronting on High Street that became our lot. Half of the loan lot was cleared and the lower half had Eucalyptus trees in various sizes. The smaller trees we could climb, bend them to the ground, and then let

them spring back. We would build a cave amongst the trees and also broke some of the smaller ones off at the roots to form hockey sticks for our games on roller skates on Petaluma Avenue with tin cans as pucks. In those days a car would come by about every 15 minutes so we would stand aside and then start all over again. The open field was our baseball and football field. Inez McFarland was one of our baseball players and a good hitter. She had a brand new bat with a camel on the label while the rest of us used broken bats from Analy High we repaired with screws and tape. Our baseballs were used so much we re-wrapped them time and time again with black electrician's tape. Most of the games we played did not require much money as we tried to manufacture our own toys, like our rubber guns, nothing more than a piece of wood cut in the shape of a handgun plus some old intertubes from a service station cut into strips. The rubber bands were pulled back on a handle and then peeled off when ready to fire. Truck intertubes were perfect for rifles, and could hold 10 or 15 shots. When we wanted a scooter all we had to do was nail skates to a two by four, add an apple box, with two small sticks for handles and then head for the hills. Calder Avenue was our favorite spot. One kid would stand at the corner of Main Street and warn us if a car was coming, if not we would continue across Main Street all the way to Petaluma Avenue. Didn't seem dangerous to us then because once again there was no traffic.

My dad owned the central cigar store in the building by the Main Street Saloon. Next door to the cigar store was the Star owned theater owned by Mr. and Mrs. Huntley. They were good friends of our parents so they allowed us to collect tickets at the door and as payment we got to see the movies free. The theater building was later used as a bowling alley, the Blue Room Restaurant and Nightclub, and eventually Carlson's Men's Department Store.

The Sebastopol Apple Show was a big production in the '20s and was located on the main street lot now used by the Chevron Station, the post office, launderette, and the Mexican restaurant. At that time there were no buildings on the entire lot. A huge tent was erected on the north half of the lot from Main Street almost to High Street and a carnival used the southern half. Inside the tent

were displays of fresh apples and dried apples stuck on animal forms such as elephants and horses, etc. plus bridges, towers, and buildings. The tent also had a stage and popular radio shows from San Francisco including one of the most popular shows of the time, "Al Pearson and His Gang", a very big variety show. The big local attraction was the Ester Walker Kiddy Review starring classmates of mine, Bob and Corine Gray, Jean Ferris, Mary Jane and Bill Hall, and others. After the apple show stopped in the early '30s, the empty lot was used for a softball field and the Witch Brother's sponsored our team starting in 1934.

The Sebastopol Union Grammar School was a big part of our lives in the late '20s. All four of us would walk from South Main Street to our school located where Parkside School is located now.

EM: Can I interrupt you a second? Now four, that means you have four children in your family?

JF: Yes.

EM: Who were your brothers and sisters and their names?

JF: My older brother was Walter, my younger sister, my only sister, was Joan, and my youngest brother was Bill. So all four of us would walk. On our walk to school we would go through what is now Ives Park. Our school consisted of one large four-story building with a basement. And, one single story building with three classrooms, kindergarten, first, and second grades, a combination basketball court and auditorium, and a huge basement. The yard in front had a baseball field, regular swings, and a large circular hand swing so you could swing from ring to ring around a complete circle. The backyard had two baseball fields and two tennis courts. Our seventh grade teacher and coach, Ed Butts, was a big part of our lives and he taught us the basics in basketball, baseball, track and field, and touch football. Mr. Butts had graduated from Chico State College and was an outstanding fullback in football. He played first string for the Santa Rosa Bone Crusher's in the statewide American Region League and played one year with Ernie Neverson, the Chicago Cardinal's in the National Football League. Just recently he was voted into the Chico State Football Hall of Fame. We always remembered that while he was playing football for Chicago he wrote my brother

and me a letter telling us of his experience. He was a fullback normally, but he played linebacker in the pros. I sure remember one remark he made that he said that he found out that even a great football player like Red Green's, he says you can't run when you get both your arms wrapped around his legs. [Laughing] So he tackled Red Green's. He felt that was just really wonderful.

JN: So Ed Butt's was he your math teacher too?

JF: Yeah, he was the seventh grade teacher.

JN: He just passed away a few years ago.

JF: I saw him just before he went up north. He was real good friend of ours. In basketball he would organize three teams according to weight and found time to coach all three. As a special favor to me, I was allowed to play all of the first game, half of the second game, and one quarter of the so-called heavy weight game. I doubt that I weighed much over 70 pounds at the time. Mr. Butts would open the gym for us at night and play with us. If we scooted past him and he was driving in for a set-up, he would grab us by the belt and stop us dead. Years later when he came back to Sebastopol to retire he remembered doing that to us. He was a great part of our lives.

And, our baseball team had uniforms with the letters SUGS across the chest. It took me awhile to find out what that stood for... Sebastopol Union Grammar School. I was always trying to figure out who SUGS were and what a SUGS was. One episode I remember is the trouble we had getting to Occidental for one of our games. Our star pitcher, Joe Poodgy, his father was a local garbage collector, borrowed his father's flat bed truck because the school bus was not available. The entire team jumped on the back of the truck and we headed out to Bodega Highway having a great time until we got to ^{O'FARRELL} O'Feral Hill. The truck stalled about half way up the hill so we had to get out and push it all the way to the top. I can't remember the game, but the point was getting there.

Mr. Butts gave Walt and me a key to the gym so that we could use the basketball court whenever we wanted. We would take several boys with us to play basketball even when we were in high school. The three classrooms were never locked, but no one ever did any damage to them, and as far as I can

remember, they never asked us to return the key. Eventually the buildings were torn down so that the current school could be built. Walt and I were always so interested in high school games we would take off as soon as our school was out and run all the way to Analay to see a baseball game or a track meet. Guess we were always running someplace. It's no wonder we could never put on any weight.

On my birthday one year, Mom asked me if I wanted a cake or a pie. My choice was a banana cream pie. And on my birthday I ran all the way home to eat the entire pie, and then got back to school in time to play baseball. [Laughing]

One of our achievements, Walt and I remained proud of was building of a high school high jump pole-vault pit in our backyard. With the encouragement of Mr. Butts, Walt got interested in high jumping and I for pole-vaulting. I found a broken bamboo-vaulting pole at the high school and as some of the crossbars were broken we brought them home. Two small Eucalyptus trees were our standards with nails hammered in to hold the bars. With a few wagonloads of sawdust from Columbo Lumber Company we had our pit completed. We spent many hours practicing and a few years later it paid off. Walt became the North Bay League 'A' Class High-jumping Champion and I was undefeated in both my junior and senior years in pole-vaulting. In my senior year I vaulted 10 feet 8 inches to break the 'A' class record by two inches, but Ken Ono sent a new record that same day. Set personal record 12 feet at Santa Rosa Junior College in 1936. Then I go into a lot of stories about visiting my aunt and uncle out in Reckon Valley, but I don't think that has anything to do with us.

JN: Was that on your mother's side or your father's side?

JF: My mother's side. They were my godparents, we spent a lot of...they had eleven acres out there on...Calistoga Road.

JN: That was out in the boonies then.

JF: There were only about half a dozen houses in the whole valley, out there in Reckon Valley then. My aunt and uncle had chickens and they had a friend who had a horse. It was the darndest horse I ever saw, you know, it was a big horse, we

always said it was an old racehorse, but it wasn't. We used to ride that horse bareback and uh...

JN: Was he a working horse too?

JF: No. He didn't have any need for a working horse, but it was just... we used to braid its tail and walk underneath it and between its legs and the horse would just stand there.

JN: This was when you were going to elementary and high school, both?

JF: Mostly grammar school. Mostly grammar school. We used to ride that horse without...sometimes without even a bridle.

JN: Just grab its main, huh.

JF: Yeah. We had a lot of fun out there. And, then in the 1930s, uh...it's got some stuff in here I don't want...

JN: When you get into that, but your dad had the cigar store during the prohibition days. That correct?

JF: Yeah, yeah.

JN: I remember that store used to have a soda fountain in it too, also, in that cigar store. Jack DiVero get it after your dad?

JF: Yeah, yeah. My dad lost it in the beginning of 1930, 1931. We lost it. We used to go in there and snooker tables. After working years at the pool tables, billiard tables, we would practice.

Then I get into the 1930s. A good part of the 1930s centered on Analy High School and sports. Naturally, the class work was something I had to do in order to be eligible for basketball, baseball, track, and one semester on the tennis team believe it or not.

EM: So, you weren't that happy about being in school. Just to play sports. [Laughing]

JF: Later I was sorry that someone hadn't counseled me on concentrating on getting better grades.

JN: Can I say something here Jack? Had you moved up to your house now at that time or were you still living down here?

JF: Well, when we started high school we moved up to where the Bradley/Rite Aid

building is now. We lived there, off Jag Alley. We were right behind Martin's Nursery. Henry Martin's.

JN: Right behind there?

JF: Yeah, right.

EM: Just off of Main.

JN: Someone else had a phone. Monise's had a nursery up there too, didn't they? In the old telephone building?

JF: Yeah. Mmmhum... Telephone building was right on the corner there.

JN: Yeah, right.

JF: Although I was able to maintain a 'B' average most of the time, a little more dedication to studies would have carried me over into a better work ethic at the Santa Rosa Junior College in the Bank of Sonoma County. Also, if I had spent more time in study hall I might have met my wife Alice a little sooner. Alice was one year behind me in school and the three years we were in high school together we never knew each other. I always say Alice was straight A's all the way through. Alice spent all of her time in study hall, and I was in the gym [laughing], and we never got to know each other until after school.

EM: What was her maiden name?

JF: Uh, Alice Paula.

EM: P-A-U-L-A?

JF: Paula, yeah. She was born in Petaluma area.

Besides the B average, my high school achievements added up to eight letters in sports, four in basketball, two baseball, and two in track. The B class pole-vault champion my junior and senior years. I received the American Legion Citizenship award along with Maxine Doss Gonzalez Paine. We were the original recipients of the American Legion Citizenship award. I remember we were both summoned to the principal's office, Arthur Shaw, because 1935 was the first year of this award, he was explaining the requirements. Our first impression was that we were to be on the committee to select the winners. Both of us were shocked to learn we were the winners. [Laughing] That's the truth too.

During these years, we couldn't do much to help Mom financially except mow some lawns for extra money, 50 cents a lawn, but maybe we were able to make her proud of our achievements. In 1934, at the North Bay League Track Meet, Walt won the 'A' class gold medal in the high jump and I won the 'B' class gold medal in the pole-vault. Without knowing what the other had done, we both had taken our medals into the stands and presented them to Mom. She was the center of attention in her area that day, as everyone wanted to see them. Walt was his class president and student body president and won letters in basketball, 'B' class football, baseball, and track. I was vice-president of the student body the first semester of my senior year, and lost the presidential election for the second semester to George Frasier by one vote.

JN: Did you have any chance there?

JF: [Laughing] I should've demanded a recount. [Laughing]

My sister, Joan, was the class officer and student body secretary. The class that did me the most good in my later life was my public speaking class. During this period I was extremely shy in the classrooms and hated to be... to make any oral reports. By senior year I decided I had to do something about this problem so I took public speaking classes at Analy, Santa Rosa J.C., and also with the American Institute of Banking after I started working at the Bank of Sonoma County. Because of this I have been able to serve as president of every organization I joined. In 1933, Walt joined the 'B' class championship team and my 1934 team also won the championship in basketball.

While in high school Joan, Walt, and I started going to dances at the Russian River. I first remember my mother trying to teach me to dance at the Odd Fellows Hall, which is still on the second floor above what used to be Carlson's Department Store. We didn't have a car so we depended on others for transportation to the dancehalls along the river. I usually had to depend on Nick ^{W. ETC} Witch and a few others. This was the era of the big bands, and dance halls were located at Miraville, Rio Nido, the Grove in Guerneville, Guerneville Park, and Monte Rio. During the summer we would have Phil Harris, Jan Garbro, Wess Brown, Glen Gray, and a lot of the big names of that time. During the winter the dance halls were closed except The Grove, so all of the locals made it the place

to be on Saturday nights. It was a great gathering place. Most of the time I could not afford to take a date so we went stag or with a group.

In 1934-1935, our senior year, our old four-story high school was torn down and the current school building was being constructed. The bleachers in the gym were covered over and made into classrooms. The basketball court was study hall and the stage and side rooms were classrooms. Some houses on what is now the girl's soccer and baseball field were also used as classrooms. We were constantly getting wet, but made the best of it. Up to this time the school had a beautiful amphitheater alongside the main building that was used for graduations. But, all this was destroyed by the new construction. As a result the class of 1935, was the first class to graduate on the football field. The boys of the class thought this was appropriate since we spent most of their time there anyway.

EM: What did they charge you to go to these dances in the Russian River area to have a big band there?

JF: Oh, you could get in for a dollar or something like that. It was very inexpensive.

JN: Or free if you sneak in.

JF: I don't remember exactly what it was, but it couldn't have been very much because we wouldn't have been able to go if had been more than a dollar.

EM: For the Depression time a dollar would have been a lot.

JF: We would not have been able to go.

JN: Do you remember The Grove of course, and what was in the middle of the dance floor? You might suggest that.

JF: Oh, all those canoes.

JN: All those canoes and they had a big pillar in the middle that looked almost like a tree, and then canoes on end standing up, four or five around them. Then they had a big swing and stuff up on the Mezzanine, and you could go up there and make out if you were lucky.

JF: That's where the expression came in football when somebody tackled somebody around the neck they called that a Guerneville tackle. So the Russian River had a big influence on our generation there. All the dance halls were really nice, and

Rio Nido was especially nice. We used to go up even in the summer in the evenings after work and dance until about eleven or twelve o'clock at night

EM: So it wasn't just weekend activity, it was all during the week too, huh?

JF: After I started working at the bank, and Alice and I were married, we used to go up as a group with two or three couples and go up and go dancing even during the week.

The softball team played when we were playing in the '30s, the three C's were, they must have come I'll say about 1935.

JN: About that time because that was an FDR project.

JF: Yeah, because they had a softball team.

JN: I remember that hitchhiking back from Pete's Drug Store on the corner on Daphne and Main, going back on weekends going back to camp. This was before the war.

EM: Where was the camp?

JF: Right there past Sixton before you made the real sharp turn to go down the road and before starting up O'Feral Hill. ^{FARRELL} It was right up in there. They had barracks and everything. Some of the kids in high school, I know Stan Rose did and Fred Silva, took some classes out there. This was before the war. They were in high school then. They did a lot of water shit, tag work, and all that. I was kind-of curious. They were probably, they'd come in, I know my sister dated some she had met in town.

EM: Did kids come from out of the area or did local people work?

JF: Oh, no no. A lot of them were from the mid-west because it was during the Depression. They were from all over the country. It was the national three C deal.

JN: I know my sister's husband was in the three C's, but he wasn't here. He was back...
I don't know where he was.

JN: That was one of the programs President Roosevelt started to help the younger people, to give them something to do, give them a chance to make a few dollars.

EM: It was interesting that they didn't just keep them in their local area. They gave them another experience to, to get them someplace else. That was kind-of neat.

JF: It was almost like being in the army.

JN: I don't recall anybody out there that joined the three C's that were local.

JF: No, no. I don't know remember anybody joining them.

EM: I was thinking of you meeting your wife. Where did you meet your wife if you didn't know each other in high school?

JF: Well, I was working at the Bank of Sonoma County and she was working for the Sebastopol Apple Grower's Union, which is down there where...

JN: By number 1.

JF: Yeah, by the Number 1 there on McKinley Street, where the fruit farmer's were along in there. That was all Apple Growers Union. An apple packing plant was there. I think they had five different packing plants.

JN: Number two was at the Vets building, then Forestville had one, Graton had one, and they had one south of town.

JF: So she was working there doing the banking for them and that's how we got acquainted. One of the fellows who worked at the bank put on a New Year's Eve party and asked me to be her escort for that night. Our first date was a New Year's Eve deal, and that started.

JN: And away we go. Did she have any brothers or sisters?

JF: Yes, she has two sisters that are younger. One's in Petaluma and one's out by Belano Corner's there.

JN: Now what are their married names?

JF: I'm at the age where I don't remember the names of my sister-in-laws.

JN: That's all right, it might come to you later. She had brothers too then?

JF: She had two brothers, but they are both dead now. So, it's like our family my older brother and I are the only ones still living. My sister and younger brother are both gone. So...

JN: Yeah, yeah right. I remember Bill had an awful time stuttering when he was in school, your younger brother. The only reason why I bring it up is that my brother, had that problem too... not very bad, but he came out of it. Didn't he?

JF: Yeah, he got to the point where he could control it pretty well.

JN: I don't recall any kids now stuttering in this age. We did have that. Bill and my

brother George were not the only ones I knew who stuttered in those days. It's amazing how many times you read the history of someone on television who made their success in speaking, stuttered. Ken Venturi had that problem.

JN: Yeah, that's right.

JF: He turned out to be a golf announcer on television for years, you know. There was awhile where you could see he hesitated a little bit and caught himself.

JN: I remember Bill, and my brother, even though he had that problem, he was popular. They weren't secluded or anything.

JF: It was a real handicap for him, it was really a problem, and nobody knows what causes those things, but it's uh...

EM: Well, your dad was around all through the '30s and business lives, what did he do for a living? What did your family do for a living if he lost his business?

JF: We don't know what we did. It was a very difficult period because he did work on a lot of WPA projects, and he had a couple of temporary jobs, but we were going by hand and mouth during that period. How my mother kept us going I don't know, but it was very difficult. I can remember a couple of times where my uncle, Fred McFarland, who was the city clerk for years, and a couple of times she would ask me to go up and see Uncle Fred and borrow fifty cents so we could buy a bag of beans so we could have dinner.

JN: Now this was Belize dad? McFarland?

JF: No, this was Belize uncle.

JN: His uncle.

JF: Yeah.

JN: Did he live up on...

JF: They lived up on High Street.

JN: Up by the library? There was a McFarland across from the library.

EM: When did they change the street name?

JN: Oh, after the war.

EM: After the war?

JN: When they paved in that street, that street was never there.

JF: That would be Belize ^{father} father, whose name was Walt. He was in the apple industry in

some way. Their sister worked at the bank when I started working at the bank, Bess McFarland, and worked at the bank for years and years and years. She's the one who roped me into the banking there. She's the one I tell later on here, that's how I got started in banking. I'll get that to that in a couple of minutes.

JN: You were telling about your uncle.

JF: We had to go up a couple of times and borrow fifty cents from him in order to have dinner. So, my mother did a lot of baking, she made a lot of bread, she made a lot of biscuits and things like that. It's funny I always try to look back on it and try to think of details during that period and uh, I think I have blacked out a lot of things that went on in that period.

JN: Except for the sports part.

JF: I don't know what we would have done if it hadn't been for the sports. It was such a depressing period that I found it difficult even try to remember or write it down in my history here. There were a lot of things that uh... like after graduation at Analay in 1935 the Depression was in full swing and few jobs were available. This was a period when college graduates were pumping gas at service stations and lucky to have the job. So with nothing else to do we worked in the packinghouses in the summer and I went to the Santa Rosa J.C. to study journalism with the thought of being a sports writer. If I couldn't play professional baseball, maybe I could write about it. While at J.C. I learned a letter in track by vaulting 12 feet and placed... tied for third in the conference meet. Journalism was the only class I was really interested in. And, I was able to write sports articles for the school paper, The Oak Leaf. This led to my appointment as sports editor in the yearbook. This job I was not able to complete because in January of 1937, Bess McFarland, the sister of Uncle Fred, knocked on our back door to let me know that Harry Fuller, vice-president of the Sebastopol National Bank, wanted to see me. For years I did not even know the bank existed for we had no need of a bank. In grammar school the bank had a program called "School Savings" and we would take our dimes and quarters to deposit. Whatever we had in those accounts were used up to live on before 1937. Mr. Fuller offered me a job as bookkeeper for a salary of 60 dollars per month. Was I thrilled. In all my thoughts of future

jobs I had never gave thought to banking. This was one of the luckiest breaks I ever received. I started work on February 1 and I stayed with the bank for 44 years and five months, retiring on June 30, 1981, as vice-president in charge of real estate loans. During my banking career I served as president of the chapter of the American Institute of Banking covering Sonoma Lake and Mendocino County's, plus president of California Banker's Association covering the previous county's plus Napa County. That's how I got started in banking.

EM: But, you didn't even have any accounting background or had taken any classes in accounting?

JF: No, no.

EM: [Laughing] They just saw potential in you.

JF: There was on the job training. I went in there without knowing anything that was going on. I started as a bookkeeper and spent a few years as a bookkeeper and then moved up to general bookkeeper and then to teller. About that same time Jack Long had joined the bank in Guerneville. He was there a year ahead of me. So we both started... So back in Guerneville Jack was a part-time janitor too, he did janitor work at night. To get a job you did practically anything you had to do, you know. Now-a-day's people wouldn't even think of starting the way we did, which was to work up gradually.

JN: My mother cleaned house for the Fuller's during the Depression. She was a house cleaner. They lived up on Palm...

JF: Alice worked for them when she was going to school. Her father died early and she was on her own, so she worked there as a maid. While she was going to school and all that time she got straight A's in high school.

EM: Well, the bank itself became, instead of merge, it became something else didn't it? The Sebastopol National and then...

JF: It changed the name of it from Sebastopol National to actually when I first started working at the bank there they had two banks there, one was called the Analy Savings Bank, which was a savings bank, and then the Sebastopol National bank was a commercial bank. They kept two separate ledgers on it, and they finally decided that was kind-of silly...

EM: Oh, so they were owned by the same entity then.

JF: Yeah, they were the same. It was just a local bank. We had branches in Sebastopol, Forestville, and Guerneville.

JN: Now, Archie Butler's office, Analy Savings, was over there?

JF: Yeah. That's where it started, the savings bank started there. The vault was still in there.

JN: Who is in there now?

EM: West America?

JN: No, no. It's not a bank. It's a business.

EM: Oh, Rosemary's Garden?

JN: Yeah, yeah, Rosemary's Garden. That's where Archie Butler was, that's where Analy Savings bank was originally. The vault is still there. You guys, somebody was saying that they got the vault. Sonoma County, West America?

EM: Analy Savings. There's a vault at West America that says Analy Savings on it. It's a little low, free standing.

JF: I think about 1939, or somewhere along in there, 1940 or so, they changed it to the Bank of Sonoma County. We still just had the three branches. It was when Arthur Swain was the president when I joined and Harry Fuller was the vice-president, and George Bent was in there, as the vice-president.

EM: They didn't have huge staffs did they? There were how many people working at the bank when you joined?

JF: Well, I don't think there were more than about 20 or 25 probably. All I know is that later after the war, uh, I was in charge of handling the dolphichuring, we had 36 employees in the three banks, this was probably about oh, 1950. We had 36 employees in the three banks and I will always remember that 32 of them were qualified for the pension plan. You had to be in the bank for three years to qualify, so we had a staff there that we had very little turn over at that time. We had people there were local, Jack Long started in 1936 and I started in 1937, so we had a lot of years in there. I remember George Frazier started with the Bank of America and they wanted to move him down to Modesto, and he didn't want to go and the family didn't want to go so he called me up one night and he says do

you think there's any chance of me getting in there. And, I says I think we can, I'll talk to Mr. Fuller in the morning. And, he says sure, have him call me. So I called him the next night and George joined us because George and I graduated from grammar school and high school together, and George's wife, Pearl, and I started kindergarten together so we went through grammar school and high school together. So, it was great having him there. I remember in those days if the bookkeepers had trouble balancing on a certain day we would give them until about five o'clock in the afternoon to get it done and if they couldn't get it done the three of us would go over there and within about half an hour we would find their problems. They could never figure out how we could do it. We says they still haven't made all the mistakes we made.

EM: Yeah, if you have to do this everyday, balance the boxes to the penny.

JF: Everything had to balance right to the penny. By sixty dollars a month when I started as a bookkeeper was sixty dollars a month. If it took me 12 hours a day to get the work done I did it. If you couldn't get it done during the time you would go back at night. You never expected overtime. In fact, all the years I worked for the bank I never got one penny of overtime because just about the time the bank started paying overtime they made me an officer. The officer's didn't get overtime.

JN: At Columbo we never got any overtime and would have to go back at night to balance it all out.

JF: In those days I always remember Mr. Holgel, who became president after Harry Fuller passed away in 1942, he would tell us one time about when he was manager of the Guerneville office. He went to Mr. Swain, this was way back in the Depression, in the '30s, early '30s probably, the mid-1930s, and asked him for a raise. And, he says I need some more money. And, he says the only thing Arthur told him was he looked at him right in the eye and said what's the matter don't you like your job? He said that was the end of my request. And, that's the way it was in the 1930s. If you had a job you did whatever had to be done, you didn't ask any questions, you didn't complain, because somebody else would take

your job in a moment. So, it was just a fortunate thing for me. I might have gone into journalism, but that would be a long shot. This was a bird in the hand.

JN: So you quite the JC then? You took that job. You didn't think too much about not taking it did you?

JF: No, no, the only thing that I asked them was if I could finish the semester, which was until the end of January, and I finished the semester and started work on February 1. So, I just wanted to get my grade in for my journalism class. I don't think I even took finals for the other classes I was taking. I just took the one for journalism because I always thought... I think over the years journalism paid off for me because uh...

EM: You have to do a lot of writing.

JF: You have to be able to write letters like this, it helped in the bank too because it helped in my dictation of letters to the secretary's. The secretary's always said that I was able to think through a dictation without stopping and then scratch that out and start over again. I knew what I wanted to say and would just say it. They always said I was the only one who could really go through a dictation without hesitation. So, another thing that helped me too was that I took two years of typing in high school. I was in four years in the service and uh, I used it in the bank, I have been typing all my life. Then in the 1940s... oh, here's an interesting thing that happened was that... how I met my wife.

Another big event that has had a lasting effect on my life was a New Year's Eve party given by Paul O'Neal. He had taken over the Fuller's home for the occasion and had invited me to be the partner of Alice Paula. We hardly knew each other at that time, but that party started something that has now lasted over 50 years. Alice and I had been at Analy at the same time, but had never met. It was a case of her being in study hall and getting straight A's and me spending all my time in the gym and getting nothing but B's and C's. The result was that we were married on October 15, 1941. Looking back the wedding may have saved my life. After we had planned the wedding I had received orders from the draft board to report for a physical examination for induction into the army on the exact date that we were to be married. The late Roy Colonel, a friend of our family,

was on the draft board and managed to have the orders cancelled. After cancellation of army draft date we continued with our wedding plans. We were married on October 15, 1941 by Father Francis Mobilhill at St. Sebastian's Church. The church was then located on Santa Rosa Avenue, now Sebastopol Avenue, across the street from where Ben and Niddy's Garage is now. At that time the church was next door to the Henry Hess Lumber Company. Our reception was at the home of Dorothy and Harry Fuller where it all started. For our honeymoon we traveled down the coast in my blue Chevrolet Coupe all the way to San Diego. One day we drove over the border to Tijuana, Mexico, just to be able to say we had been out of the United States. Our first home was a duplex at 428 Monderdale Avenue owned by Mr. and Mrs. Nyoni. George Balosi, was the grammar school principal, lived in the adjoining apartment. Alice was working at the Sebastopol Apple Grower's Union and I was at the bank of Sonoma County so we were both within walking distance to work. Then in the 1940s, the first five years I was taken up by the United States Airforce.

EM: So, when did you eventually have to go off? When did they grab you?

JF: I actually went in one year later, I went in in November in 1942. I got a whole year there. It was a... as I indicate here, it probably saved my life is what I was talking about. One year after Alice and I were married the draft board called again and this time they meant it. [Laughing] I have often wondered what would have been my fate if I had entered the service in 1941, but everything worked to my advantage when I was inducted in November of '42. The army intercore was separated from the army, into the airforce, a completely separate unit. And, in the process was setting up their own finance department. Because of my banking background I was assigned to airforce finance department while at the presidio of Monterey. After one weekend at Monterey I was given a free train trip to Miami Beach, Florida for basic training. Beach front hotels...

EM: Pretty good for basic training. [Laughing]

JF: Beach front hotels had been confiscated for barracks and push restaurants were used as mess halls. I had never had such large and excellent meals in my life and in three months my weight went from 120 to 135. Our barracks was a four story

hotel located right on the beach so on Sunday's all we had to do was step out the backdoor and go swimming in the nice warm ocean. Basic training was a snap. We marched around the streets for lectures under palm trees, calisthenics, post-armor drills, swimming, and three big meals a day. I remember the first time we went to the beach to do the calisthenics. They told us to put on our bathing suits. We did some calisthenics and then they said okay, everybody into the water, and everybody went rushing into the water. I was used to the water here in Salmon Creek, how cold it was, I walked down there and stuck my toe in there. It was like putting your foot in the bathtub, from there on in I went running in there with the rest of them. I couldn't believe the water could be that warm. After this tough basic training we were off to three months of army finance school at Wakeforce College in North Carolina. From a hotel room with regular twin beds, we went to a double deck bunks covering the floor of a gymnasium and three horrible meals a day. Three months here I lost the 15 pounds I gained. They were some of the worst meals, they were from a civilian contract deal, and they weren't putting any money into the food at all. A lot of times after a meal we would go into the PX and buy a milkshake because we were still hungry. [Laughing] We just couldn't eat it. After graduation we had a choice of applying for officer's training school at Duke University, just 15 miles away, or take the chance of being shipped as close to home as possible. Here was another case, there have been about three or four or five situations in my life that were a turning point that somewhere I always felt a guardian angel was looking out for me. Because here was another one. There were only six in our class who were from California, so I chose to skip OCS and take a chance. Another lucky break. It worked. My orders sent me to Lamor Airforce Base just south of Fresno. After a few months of living in the barracks and hitchhiking home occasionally, I was assigned to temporary duty at a primary training field at Boshellas. This type of base was privately owned with no quarters for airforce personnel so we were paid to live off the base and report to work at eight a.m. and leave at five. Alice joined me for a few months. We were able to rent a room in a private home with kitchen

privileges. That was quite the popular thing in those days. I don't know if you were aware of it.

EM: I've heard people talking about it, doubling up and many different living situations.

JF: That was a great thing we could do. When I returned to Lamor, I asked the major to consider me if another assignment came up. A few months later he called me into his office to offer me a transfer to Oxnard Primary Training Field. I had to ask him where in the world was Oxnard, but I didn't hesitate very long. I'll take it. Alice was able to join me full time and we found a nice little cottage behind a residence in Ventura. Alice had no trouble finding a job with the Ventura County Farm Bureau and we settled down to as close as you could get to civilian life in the service. One time during the war, there were hundreds of these primary training fields around the country. Here again, my luck got me assigned to one owned by General Half-Arnold's son-in-law. Half-Arnold was a commanding general of the airforce.

We spent a year in Lancaster up in the desert during the summers it would get up to close 120 degrees up there, but it was a dry heat and in August I was transferred to Bakersfield. The humidity in the valley there was so great, and it was just as hot at midnight as it was at five o'clock in the afternoon. I couldn't sleep for about the first month I was at Bakersfield even though the temperature wasn't anywhere near 120 degrees, but I didn't like it in Bakersfield at all. While we were in Bakersfield Alice got a job with the ^{KCPN} ~~Current~~ County Chamber of Commerce and the manager was always trying to get me to... he wanted Alice to stay. And, he kept telling me that I will get you job at any of the banks here no problem and I told him I says that there isn't a bank here that can pay me enough to live in Bakersfield, I'm going back to Sebastopol.

Another thing that worked out for me was that while I was at inner-field in the airforce, the airforce was returning flying officers from Europe and housing them with us. This overworked our small staff so they assigned officers who could type to work in our office as clerk typists. One captain liked to play golf so we would play together on weekends. The captain ended up in charge of separation center on the base. It was his job to determine when soldiers

accumulated enough points for discharge. He assured me that the day I reached the required points I would be on my way to a separation center. His office was across the street from the football field and when he wanted to practice golf he would call the finance officer and ask him to send me to his office. He had a seven iron and an eight iron so we could get at opposite ends of the field and hit balls back and forth until I got a guilty conscious and went back to work. [Laughs] This is where sports played such a big part in my life. It worked out sometimes. It was early in January when I could file the points needed and true to his word the captain had me transferred to Camp Veal in Marysville for discharge. It was a great feeling to get back to Sebastopol, our apartment, and my job at Bank of Sonoma County where I stayed until I retired in 1981.

Then our son was born. That was in January of 1946 that I got out of the service. John Michael Fore, our son, came into our lives on May 31, 1946. When we were married we lived in a duplex apartment at 428 Monderdale, during the war they allowed us to sublet the apartment so now we had a home to come back to. It was only a one-bedroom apartment so when John grew we also outgrew the one bedroom. About 1952, we purchased our present home at 509 North Main Street from Tony and Eleanor Mones. It turned out to be a good location because I could walk to work and John was able to use the high school fields as his backyard playground.

JN: I got a question on there now. It used to be called Nomin Way before Fore Way now.

JF: I never knew it had a name.

JN: It never had a name up there. But, I talk to Leo now and he told me before.

JF: Yeah, because they had the house on the corner there. They lived on the corner there right across from the school. It was a surprise for me because the apartment on Monderdale had an entrance on Fore Way there and then we moved on the other side of the street so we still used the same... we called them alley in those days. When Bill Edmund retired... I was city treasurer for 20 years... they thought they ought to do something for Bill Edmund so they named Edmund Way after him. Un-be-nonst to me I didn't see it until I saw it on a map a few years later that

they... Fore Way there. They didn't tell me they were going to do it or anything like that. I always remember my son's expression when he found out that it was... that alley was named after me. He says I'm sure glad they didn't put that sign up while I was still going to Analy. Geniuses are never appreciated at home.

JN: Well, Leo had told me that and I says I never remember a sign up there. They never had a sign up there, people just called it Nomins Ally or something.

JF: Oh I see, I never heard that expression. I can understand why it would be.

JN: Last year they wanted to change that from Fore Way to some Indian name because the Pomo's or something. So I said I think you better...

EM: Well, why would they pick that street? Why not another street that is unnamed?

JN: Because they thought the Indians were up there in early Sebastopol life they had some Indian village like they were down here walking around. I don't think you're going to get any success to that because all the names are out and if you're going to change a couple of names in this town I don't like it. Names for streets and places, I knew a street was for somebody else like Martin Luther King in Berkeley. There is always new streets going up, give it a new name. There's always new streets going up, and there's history behind those names.

EM: We need a campaign to change it back. [Laughs]

JF: Monderdale was at the original house, the Victorian that's next door...

JN: Where did the Finns live, old man Finn?

JF: On Wallace. He lived on the corner of Fore Way and Wallace. That hole was a figure at one time. We had uh... there was still a few vines in the little lot where the apartment building went in and we still have sprouts of vines coming up there.

JN: Chardonnay? [Laughs]

EM: How did you get to be city treasurer? That was a political office you were elected to it?

JF: No, well, it was in a way, Milo Moore had been treasurer and the city came to the bank and they wanted somebody to do the bookkeeping for them actually, a report at the end of the month. It took me about half an hour, an hour to do and they came to me and asked me if I would do it. Milo Moore was still the city treasurer, but I was doing the bookwork for him and the bank was paying me 25 dollars a

month just to do that so I would make up the report and take it over to Milo Moore and have him sign it and I'd take it over to city hall. After a few years of that, Moore went to the city and said that he wanted more money, he wanted to be paid by the... I don't know what he was paid, maybe he was paid 25 dollars a month, I don't know... but he wanted more money because he couldn't afford to do it for less and all he did was sign his name. [Laughs] So, they got rid of him some way and they just appointed me as city treasurer.

JN: I thought your uncle had that for awhile.

JF: No, he was city clerk.

JN: Oh, the clerk, okay.

EM: Yeah.

JF: But, he was gone by then. He was out by then. They appointed me city treasurer to replace him. I was re-elected every four years and I was there for 20 years.

EM: When did that start? What year did you get appointed?

JF: Golly, I don't remember. It had to be probably somewhere in the 1950s.

JN: '50 to '70. Twenty years then.

JF: Somewhere in there then. It was after the war I know that of course. I'm not very good at remembering dates and things like that. It wasn't much of a job. It got to the point where they felt the title should be within the city hall. So they came to me and says, well, how do you feel about it. And, I said well, I didn't ask for the job. They won't break my heart if I don't have it. So, they put it on the ballot to abolish the position of city treasurer and now the city manager of the financial does it. It got to the point where for a long time there they had just enough money to get by on, but as they built up the fund they had to be invested in some way and I just didn't have the time to do it. So I was kind-of glad to get out of it. There was another one of those things that was just handed to me. Twenty-five dollars a month was a big raise for me in those days you know. Anytime you could make 25 dollars a month extra you were uh...

JN: Okay, you're back from the war now. What year is it that you're working?

JF: In uh, in the later part of... the rest of the '40s after I got out of the service I settled

into the routine of family life, the continuance of my banking career, and watching John grow. I became active in the American Institute of Banking, a national banking organization involved in arranging night school classes on various phases of banking. First I took several classes covering accounting, commercial law, public speaking, and economics. Then became a member of board of directors. When Jim Keegan became president he asked me to be his secretary/treasurer. This eventually led to me being the president in 1951. More on that later. Alice and I were also active in the YLI, YLI and Plus Field the daily dance club where we served as co-chairmen one year.

The highlight of the early '50s was in 1951 when Alice and I had what we thought was to be our trip of a lifetime. That was before we discovered Hawaii and Scotland and Ireland. As president of AIB, we were entitled to a trip to the national convention, which that year was in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The bank gave me two weeks off for the convention and by adding our regular two weeks vacation time we had a whole month to make the trip by train. The trip to Pittsburgh was like Mardi Gras and New Year's Eve everyday for five days. One carload of bankers from Northern California congregated in Oakland and started with the get acquainted party as we crossed the Sierra's to Reno.

EM: The old fashioned convention. [Laughs] Party, party, party.

JF: We had the thrill of going through the covered sections of tracks you see on the mountains south of interstate 80. Next day the southern California group joined us in Reno. Another party. Then onto Salt Lake City where the Northwest group joined. Another party. In St. Louis, the Midwest group joined us and from there to Pittsburgh we had a complete train as an AIB special. The convention lasted five days with me going to the meetings and Alice enjoying fashion shows and side trips to the University of Pittsburgh and the Heinz Pickle Factory. Each evening we would get together with other couples from northern California for dinner. One thing I still remember from the convention speeches was a joke told by the retiring national president. He offered his hope to the incoming president and told the story of the man who had said his prayers every night and had concluded by saying "oh Lord, please use me, oh Lord please use me, but in the

advisory capacity.” [Laughs] I always liked that. After the convention we took off on our own and traveled by train to New York City where we spent several days with Dorothy and Larry Frir at their home in Larksmard, a short train ride from the city. Dorothy was the widow of Harry Fuller, the man who hired me for the bank. And, Larry was the vice-president of Chase National Bank. Larry had access to Chase’s box seats at both Yankee stadium and the pole grounds. The sports comes into it again. First, he was able to get us seats at Yankee stadium in the first row behind the Yankee dugout, but it rained. Next day he came home with tickets that he said were not as good, they were only in the third row behind the dugout. This was Joe Dimagio’s last year. The first year for Mickey Mantle, and Phil Risuto was still the short stop. Later we went to the pole grounds to see Willy Mays and his first year with the Giants. Then between the games we made it to the top of the Empire State Building, dinner at Lo Chow’s one of the oldest restaurants in New York City. While in New York we were able to contact a couple who were probably our best army buddies while we were at Lancaster. We drove over to Iceslip on Long Island to visit Peggy and Wayne “Doc” Moore. Doc was a staff sergeant in the post commanders office and Peggy was a long time resident of Lancaster. We still exchange Christmas cards each year. We also took a fast roundtrip on the Stanton Island Ferry so we could get a closer look at the Statue of Liberty. Back on the train to Washington D.C. for an overnight stay, which included a visit to the United States senate, the Supreme Court building, the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, etc. This was my second visit to our capital having had a short stop over in 1943 when I was transferred from Wakeforest to Lamor. But, this was the first for Alice. We had always intended to go back for a longer stay, but never made it. Guess Hawaii got in the way. Another highlight was our visit to Ford Theatre where Lincoln was shot and we were able to go to the theatre box and stood in the exact spot where Lincoln sat and then went across the street to the room where he died. Next, the train took off for Chicago where we had an eight-hour layover. Alice wanted to see the huge Marshall Field’s department store, at that time the country’s largest. After walking our legs off we needed a rest so ducked into the nearest movie theater to

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sit down and watch a ~~Dandy~~ Kay Show. To our surprise after the movie ended the lights came on for a stage show and we were treated to our first sight of Nat King Cole and his trio. He played the piano and sang and needless to add we have been his fans ever since. From Chicago we trained to Seattle aboard the Olympic Iowapa spending most of the time in the observation car enjoying the rest of the scenery. From Seattle to Oakland we were aboard the Owl and drove to Skyline Ranch where John had been staying with Uncle Walt and apparently having a great time ridding UbaCain, Walt's palomino. He was glad to see us, but wasn't happy to leave the ranch. He couldn't understand why we couldn't stay at Skyline with him. [Laughs] One thing... another thing I didn't put in here, but it was a study in psychology that I learned from a man.

I went into the diner on the train one morning to have breakfast and the waiter put me at a table for two. A man was sitting there reading his newspaper. As soon as I sat down he put the paper down and looked up and said good morning. We started talking back and forth and found out that he was in charge of the warehouses for the American Tobacco Company west of the Mississippi. He said I travel a lot by train, and he says I found out that if you and I hadn't spoken within the first 30 seconds we would have sat in stone silence and would never have talked. And, many many times since then I have been in situations where you go into a doctors office or you go into a room and if you just sit down and say nothing there is no conversation. But, within the first thirty seconds when you sit down and you just say hello to someone the conversation will flow. I will always remember that man, I forgot his name, but I had his card for a long time but I lost it. That study in psychology was always fascinating to me. It was the same way with the customers at the bank. You learn... I remember one customer that I had, an elderly man I had came in and for some reason I remember he was very abrupt in his talk and he irritated me. And, I just developed... I didn't know the man, but I just didn't like him, you know. He would come in every month to make a payment. About that time we got a instructional manual that came out. And, one of the things in there said that one thing you have to remember is your customer is ill at ease coming into the bank. He's in strange territory, you're at

home. Your job is to make him feel comfortable. Forget about yourself and project yourself to him. I thought, well, I'll try it on this guy. So the next time he came in I started asking him something about his business or his job and I forgot that I was uptight and I was projecting to him and we wound up to be the best of friends. He came in about a year later and he said you don't know, but I write poetry. He says I have a couple of poems here that are my favorites that I would like you to have. And, I still have them. When he left town he moved down to San Diego. He came in and he says they have a little uh... he was going to a senior center down there... he says they have a little monthly magazine that they sent out. He says if you like it, I'd sent it up to you. For about a year or so he sent that magazine to me. This was a sample of what a little psychology would do. I wish I had studied psychology in school, but I guess I did my job.

Then after that we thought that would be our big trip, but I had always wanted to go to Hawaii. When I was in grammar school they used to have a radio broadcast coming from Hawaii called "Hawaii Calls" and Harry Owens was the orchestra leader over there and he's the one what wrote "Sweet My Loni". Every week they used to have this radio broadcast and the Hawaiian music just fascinated me when I was a kid. I always loved the sound of it. One time I was on vacation and came back and while I was gone the board of director's extended our vacation period from two weeks to a month. And ,Don Scott was the chariman of the board, he was a local attorney, he came in the day I got back and welcomed me back. And, I says only trouble is I just found out that I got to spend another two-week vacation and I don't know what to do. For some reason I just said, I've always wanted to go to Hawaii and he says well we were playing cards with the Tisher's, Walt and Verna Tisher, and we're going to go over in November, why don't you and Alice join us. He says we'll get another couple and we'll go over as a group, and we got Stan and Ethel James to go. So, I went home and Alice is not been one to do things for the first time. So I went home and I says we're going to go to Hawaii in November and absolutely no response. Yes or no or anything. After a couple of days I start talking about Hawaii you know, and I says, jeez it's going to be nice to get over there, you know, and still

no response. So, after about a month of that I finally went home one night and I said it's about time for me to make reservations, do I make 'em for one or for two? It's an old story about hitting a mule over the head with a two-by-four. [Laughing]. She says well, I didn't know you were that interested in it. Well, I says, will you go? And, she says yeah I will go. I didn't really know if she will go until I got her on the plane. We had a wonderful time over there. They had been over there before so we were just travelling on their... so we spent two weeks over there. One of the first things we did when we got home... the first thing Alice said was, the next time we go to Hawaii I want to do this or do that. Now she's been back nine times and I've been back eleven times. Then in-between I always wanted to go to Scotland to play golf at the old course at St. Andrew's. And, Dean James, the pro at Oakmont put on trips to Hawaii and then he was going to take one over to Scotland so I went on that. Alice didn't want to go. She had an idea that she liked Hawaii but Scotland would be too cold. She doesn't like cold weather. So, I went over to Scotland and then '79, and then '82 I went back to Scotland, and then '85 I went back to Scotland, and then '88 I went back to Scotland. I went over there six times and in between there I went to Ireland three times.

JN: Anyway relatives, kin, in Ireland?

JF: No, my family didn't have any connections over there at all. The first time I went over to Scotland we were spending eight days in Scotland and five days in Ireland and I called my mother's brother who was the only one in the family that was still alive and asked him what he knew about his father and if they had any connections over there. And, he says I was only six years old when my father died and I had no idea what was going on and he was the last of the family. But, they died, both of them died before I was born. My mother died when she was 51 before I even thought about genealogy so we didn't have any chance to ask her. Most of the information I have gotten, I've gotten from the other side of her family, the Dawdles over in El Verano. So, we... all I was able to find out was that he was born in County Cork. I made it a point to go around County Cork. All my trips to Ireland I never bumped into an O'Connor. There's a whole slew

of them in the phone books, but I never bumped into one of them. The closest I ever came was at one of the golf courses I asked them if they had a bag tag I could buy to keep as a souvenir that shows the name of the course and the name of the pro. And the guy says well no, I just came on as a pro and I don't have any made of yet. He says I think I have one left over from the former pro and he pulled it out, and the former pro was an O'Conner. [Laughs] That was the closest I ever came. I got that at home as part of my souvenirs. But, I started playing golf in about 1939...

Paige Spuncer was our softball coach in about 1939 or 1940. And, Paige Spuncer used to run a service station here in town and was a very good friend of ours. He had a set of golf clubs. And, Walt and I had played just about every sport we could get our hands on. We wasted more times on sports that probably could have been better off doing other things, but we had talked him into taking us out to Northwood and we got hooked the first day we were out there. We didn't know a darn thing about the game, but we just... we kept pestering him to take us out again. And, he says I don't have time to go out anymore. He says I only play about once a year. I'll tell you what I'll do, I have a whole set of golf clubs there in the golf bag and a bunch of golf balls in there and tees and everything. He says I'll sell you the whole bunch for ten dollars if you let me borrow it back once a year. So that's how my brother and I... Then you remember Mitchim Fritz, who was the manager of the local shipping part of the railroad. He and Bud Park were in the railroad and he bought a new set of clubs so he gave us a set of wooden shafted clubs, which were really the antique clubs. And so I used the wooden shafted irons and we both used the woods from Spuncer, Big Spuncer's set. That's how we got started. We got two sets of clubs for ten dollars.

JN: You didn't take lessons first. Everybody now takes lessons first.

JF: I wish I had taken lessons because my brother and I play baseball since the time we could walk so when we started playing golf we were hitting with a baseball swing. We used to laugh because we used to go up to Healdsburg and play 18 holes up there, go around twice. We would go... we'd hit 17 slices into trouble

and we'd get to the 18th tee and we'd hit one right straight down the middle so we would say oh boy, we have to come back next week. We'd come back and hit 17 slices and none would go down the middle. We finally called that our sucker shots.

EM: Is there only one course in Healdsburg?

JF: I don't know. I haven't been up there for years.

JN: There used to be a mountain course.

EM: I didn't even know it was one in existence except I went to a party at the clubhouse, the lady's clubhouse or whatever up there.

JF: We played up there for a lot of years, at Northwood. Then in about 1950 I started playing at Northwood with Don Scott and Holodina's Kurt Stain, and I would get up every Saturday morning, have breakfast down here at seven o'clock in the morning and leave at 7:30 and be up at Northwood at eight o'clock in the morning. I think one year we played 50 Saturday's out of the year. We were there a couple of times when it was raining and the manager of the course didn't even show up. We went out and played anyway.

JN: Did you belong to the Santa Rosa Golf Club? Do you still belong?

JF: Yeah, yeah.

JN: When did you first join that club?

JF: I joined there in 1961.

JN: They were there for a couple of years then. When did they move out there from Polmingo?

JF: They moved out to the present course in '58.

JN: Okay, so it was three years or whatever then when you joined.

JF: The reason why I joined the country club was because my son had gone all through Little League baseball and Pony League and had the chance to play on the baseball team at Analy. But, he came to me in January or February and says, Dad he says, I think I'd rather play on the Analy golf team rather than the baseball team. I had always told him because I started playing golf when he was two years old, and by the time he was ten years old he was playing with me most of the time. So, when he was 14 he wanted to play on the golf team and I always told

him that if you get serious about golf I will find a good golf course for you to play on so I used that as an excuse to join a country club. So, I joined the country club for I think it cost \$500 in those days. Now it cost \$25,000.

EM: Where is that club?

JF: It's out on Hole Road.

JN: ^{Hall} Hole and ^{Pietza} Pietza, right across from ^{EASTSIDE} Earlside School.

EM: You don't even notice it there.

JF: It's a sub-division around there between the golf course and ^{HALL} Hole Road so you don't see it unless you're looking for it. I joined there in '61. He had full use of the course. He played on the Analy team for four years and he was the number one man the last three years. He spent most of the summers when he was in high school out there at the country club. By the time he was a senior he had a pretty good golf game. He was shooting in the 70s when he was 17 years old. Then he went to junior college and he was number two man on the junior college team for two years. He was captain the second year. Then he gave up... then he went into the service. He went into USF, when he graduated from USF he went into the service for four years. Then after that he couldn't play at the country club on my membership so he started playing some of the public golf courses. And, he didn't like that so he just gave up the game. He didn't play for about 15 years. So, I finally got him a membership at the country club. Now he's a member at the country club. He and I play every Saturday.

JN: After you get to a certain age he can't use your membership, is that it? Is that the way it works?

JF: Yeah, you can do it while you are in school or in the military, but after that they have to have their own. So he can come out and play, but as a guest. So now he's a member, he's been a member of the club for about 10 years now.

JN: For \$500?

JF: It cost a little bit more for him to get in to it. [Laughing] Every once in awhile I have the enjoyment of having his son plays, so the three of us go, we have three generations out there playing.

JN: How old is he?

JF: He's 29 now.

EM: When was our little golf course built?

JN: Well, Walt Bennett built that with Scottie, Scottie McDonnell was working out there.

JF: Yeah, Scottie McDonnell built the greens out there, Louis Davis owned it.

JF: Louis Davis built the course.

JN: That was after I moved out there. There was no golf course when I was there and that was probably '50...

JF: Early '50s wasn't it?

JN: Yeah, early '50s because they've been out there for about 52 years.

JF: Yeah, because during the '50s I was playing at Northwood. Then 1959 I forget what happened... oh, somebody, Louis Davis... I began playing out at the Sebastopol course here.

JN: Louis Davis used to be the mayor down at El Cerrito at one time. His nephew was running the golf course out there. But, it wasn't anything...

JF: They started the men's club out there in '59.

JN: That's after Sam bought it.

JF: I won the championship out there in '59 and then I joined the country club in '61.

They talked me into coming back and defending my championship. So I went back and won it the second year. So, then I quit.

JN: That's a tough little course because the greens are so small. Because you have to hit the green.

JF: I always say playing that course is like being a short stop on a baseball team because you have to learn to play the hops. [Laughs]

JN: Exactly. The one in Santa Rosa is a championship course.

JF: Yeah, they're doing a real remodeling job out there now. They're remodeling a lot of the greens and another year it's going to be a really top-notch golf course. All the greens are being redone. They're going to build a new clubhouse.

JN: It doesn't seem like they have enough golf courses with people playing as they are.

JF: Yeah.

EM: A lot of golfers, huh.

JN: Oh yeah, its...

JF: I heard an expression once, golf is a lot like fishing in that it keeps a man from wasting his time in any other way. [Laughing] But, it's a great thing, I've used my golf clubs to carry me, I've played golf in Scotland... about 25 courses in Scotland, and I've played in England, Ireland, and Germany, and Switzerland.

JN: Why don't you give us a real quick one about playing softball at Analay and the teams.

JF: 1834 softball came to Sebastopol and was leagues for men over 35 and girls. The sport grew until we had over 30 teams in local leagues alone. Naturally Walt and I jumped in with both feet. The Wich brother's team, which started in 1934, was Nick and George Wich, John "Lefty" Wich joined later, Walt Fore, Jack Fore, John and Rudy Duckhorn, Jim Caboochi, Eddie Gonzals, and Art Johnson. Seven members of this team stayed together until 1942 when WWII interrupted our lives. After two years the Wich brothers discontinued sponsorship of the team because our big rivals, the Walt Stone Plymouths, were from the Cunningham area and the team spirit was so intense the Wich brother's firm could not get any business out of the Cunningham and Hezel areas. For the next two years we were the Flying A's sponsored by Frank Silva Associated Service Station later owned by the Baner Spuncer. From 1938 to 1942 we were the bankers from Bank of Sonoma County and by this time we were Sonoma County champions. By luck we wound up with almost a perfect line-up. Left fielder, Eddie Gonzals, was small quick and the perfect lead out man. Short stop and pitcher, Nick Wich, was great defensively and a consistent hitter, ideal for the number two spot. Number three was Walt Fore, short fielder, "Lefty" Wich first base, and George Wich, our pitcher, and number four and five provided the homerun power. John Duckhorn was an excellent third baseman and a steady hitter, Phil Suza was a steady right fielder, and I was a catcher because no one else wanted it. Second base and center field were the two positions that changed quite often. As second base we had Rudy Duckhorn and Larry Douder, and in center was brother Bill and Howard Norton. We won the city league two or three years in a row so we were asked to play exhibition games on Friday nights against all comers including teams from

San Francisco. By this time we were playing our games at what is now Parkside School and it was not unusual to have a crowd of about 1,000 spectators at the games. It was a great team and a lot of fun. After the war softball was never the same. At least it wasn't for me.

EM: Now, the size of the ball you were talking about, did you always use that big sized ball?

JF: No, when we started out in '34 we used a 14-inch ball, but when we went to the other field it was a 12-inch ball, which was a regulation size for softball. We were a young team, we were all kids. We went down one time to play in Novato. I always remember this game because they were more mature. They were in their 30s or so, I thought they were a lot older, but they... we were in our 20s and they were... a lot of the fellas on the team was talking to people in the stands and we heard him say oh we won't have any trouble with these kids he says we should be able to beat them easily. I always remember the first four batters, Eddie Gonzals got up and got a hit, Nick got a hit, Walt, my brother, got a double, and "Lefty" Wich hit a homerun. [Laughs] We had four runs at the bat and I think we beat them by about 15 runs that night. We had a... if you were going to put a team together that is just about what you would want to have a good lead off man, a good steady number two hitter, and three, four, and five guys who could hit the ball out of the park anytime. And, Lefty Wich could hit the ball, a softball, almost as far as someone could hit a baseball. He hit the back of that school building from on the fly one time. That was about 30 or 40 yards over the right field fence. George Wich was a real good pitcher, he was a very deceptive pitcher. This was before they started the windmill type pitching. George had a wrist action, underhand wrist action, that made that ball rise just a matter of about three inches. Just enough so the guys couldn't hit it. They'd see it coming in like a straight ball and they'd swing at it and they'd pop it up. He and I used to spend hours in his backyard there playing catch and I got to the point where I would just hold my glove here and he would hit it and I would hold it over here and he would hit it. We didn't have any signals, but I would just move my glove around and he would hit it. We had a heck of a lot of fun in those days.

JN: I think we all did during the Depression even though the Depression was tough.

EM: You had to make your own fun.

JF: We did the same thing in basketball. I don't know if you remember Weeks

Hardware and the Edmund games. We started in '35 and '36 Bud Park helped us organize two basketball teams and we had a basketball light weight game and unlimiteds, and my brother played on the Edmund Park team and I played on the Weeks Hardware team. We had Nick Wich and John Duckhorn, Francis and Bob Coldwell from Santa Rosa, Bill Banger. We played...

JN: That was everyone on your team.

JF: Yeah. We played 36 games in two years and we only lost one and that was to the

University of California 145-pound team. We had a return match with them and beat them by 15 points the second time and we had a... in school we had coaches that used to control offense so you had to move the ball around certain set plays. We got on this time and we had no set plays, everything was a fast break we were at that age where you were 18 years old and could run all day. We played a team from Fairfield at about the middle of the second quarter we were lined up on their free throw line and a fella from Fairfield next to me was huffing and puffing and he turned to me and says when do you guys stop running. And I says we don't, and he says oh heck. We were beating teams by 30 or 40 points there. We looked like teams from San Francisco and all over northern California. We had a lot of fun. In fact, one night we got into a scrimmage against the Edmund team, the bigger guys, and we beat them. We could just out run them. Basketball was... I remember at that time they had a lightweight team at the junior college and the coach kept asking me when are you going to play for us, and I says well I'm going to play for them over there. And, uh... He was kind-of mad at me for not playing at junior college but we had so much fun. As I say, if it wasn't for sports it would have been really boring.

JN: Did you play on the weekend baseball teams the city had?

JF: No, no. I never played baseball.

(End tape.)